

Survey # WA-III-129
Street Address 4325 Main Street
Town, State Rohrersville, Maryland 21779
private X, public _____

Approximate date 1916 (date tablet)

According to the cornerstone for this building, the Rohrersville Town Hall, it was built by the Rohrersville Cornet Band in 1916. It appears similar to the churches in the village with a three bay gable front. It is four bays deep. The band hall/town hall is constructed of bricks on fieldstone foundations. The bricks are laid in all stretcher bond with the walls embellished with corbeled pilasters separating the bays. Corbeling also defines the "capitals" of the pilasters and the cornice in the front gable. Main windows are long and narrow with four over four lights beneath segmental brick arches. The main entrance is in the center bay of the front elevation. The band hall is on the site of the McCoy Marble Works, established by G. Washington McCoy in 1837. McCoy also founded the Rohrersville Cornet Band in the same year. The band which is still in existence is the oldest town band in Maryland and one of only a few in the US which have been continuously active for so long a period. The marble works continued to operate at this site until Thomas Smith, son-in-law of G.W. McCoy moved the operation to another location in Rohrersville. The Marble Works continued until Smith's death in 1939.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
Social/Educational/Cultural

- IV. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Band hall/town hall

Photo Reference: Photo # 6

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD, Architectural Historian
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: 6/97

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WA-III-129

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Town Hall

and/or common Band Hall (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 4325 Main Street

☐ not for publication

city, town Rohrersville

☐ vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county

Washington

3. Classification

Category

☐ district)
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process
☐ being considered
☒ not applicable

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☒ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military

☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Rohrersville Cornet Band

street & number 4315 Main Street

telephone no.: None

city, town Rohrersville

state and zip code Maryland 21779

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

Liber 147

street & number 95 West Washington Street

Folio 9

city, town Hagerstown

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal

☐ state

☐ county

☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. WA-III-129

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count = 1

The band hall is a one-story, 3-bay wide, 4-bay deep brick building constructed in 1916. Located on the east side of Main Street, the town hall was constructed as both a town hall and a band hall. The freestanding building is located in the central portion of the Village of Rohrersville in a residential setting. Although some original elements have been covered by new material or structures, the building retains its original ornamental massing, and material.

The band hall sits close to Main Street within a cluster of dwellings and churches and is located on one of the smallest lots in Rohrersville. A concrete slab leads from the sidewalk to the front door. A stone wall lines the property on the north side and a dirt driveway is on the south side. A plaque in the lower northern corner of the facade states:

Town Hall
Built by the Rohrersville
Comet Band
1916

The 35' X 65' rectangular shaped band hall is a one-story, front gable, brick building resting on a fieldstone foundation. All of the windows on the main floor are long and narrow with four over four lights beneath segmental brick arches. The facade and side elevations are vertically divided by projecting brick pilasters into four bays on the side elevations and two bays on the facade. Window openings are aligned within each bay. Corbeling defines the "capitals" of the pilasters in the front gable. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the north and south sides of the roof each contain a chimney located midway in the length of the roof.

The front or west facade is symmetrical with a central double doorway and a modern pent roof covered with asphalt shingles and aluminum siding. Plywood covers the original doors and a segmental brick arch is visible above the pent roof. The front gable features a smaller version of the windows on the main floor and is highlighted with a row of stepped bricks, cornice returns, and a plain fascia.

On the north and south (side) elevations the main floor contains four windows evenly interspersed along the wall. The basement of the north elevation is deeper than the south elevation. Basement windows are two side-by-side lights on the south elevation and 2/2 lights on the north elevation and all are beneath segmental brick arches.

The rear elevation contains two 1/1 aluminum window on the main floor, cornice returns in the gable end, and a double panel wood door leading into the basement.

The band hall interior is a large open space with a stage in the east end and two very small rooms that flank the entryway in the west end. A ticket window is located in the entrance on the north wall. Walls throughout the building have wainscoting on the bottom and plaster above. A dropped ceiling covers the original pressed tin ceiling. Steep narrow stairs at the building entrance at the west end lead to a storage area above the dropped ceiling where the original tin roof and the large 4/4-light transom window above the front doors are visible. The stage is flanked by decorative woodwork. All of the doors, including the front doors, are wooden with five horizontal panels.

The band hall has undergone some changes including replacement of the two rear wooden windows with aluminum windows, the addition of a dropped ceiling that covers the pressed tin ceiling, a pent roof that covers the front door transom, and plywood over the front double doors. The only permanent change is the replacement of the wood windows. A garage previously located at the rear of the property that

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housed the bandwagon, no longer exists. With all of its architectural features intact, except for two windows, the building retains a high degree of integrity.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below	
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	education	military
1700-1799	art	engineering	music
1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	communications	industry	politics/government
		invention	other(specify)
Specific dates	1916	Builder/Architect	Unknown
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C
and/or			D
Applicable Exceptions:	A	B	C
			D
			E
			F
			G
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Built in 1916, the band hall was also built as a town hall. Constructed by the Rohrsersville Comet Band, the building stands on property originally owned by the band's founding director in 1837. The hall is significant for its association with the community as a meeting place and for its association with the oldest town band in Maryland and one of the two or three oldest bands continuously active in the country.

History

Washington McCoy, a marble cutter, acquired seven tenths of an acre from Martin Eakle and his wife in 1857. On this property he located his business, the Marble Works, in a small board and batten building. According to the 1877 Washington County Atlas, W. McCoy lived adjacent to the north side of the Marble Works. McCoy organized the Rohrsersville Band in 1837 and was director from 1837 to 1890¹. The band was founded early in Rohrsersville's history. The village, located in the fertile area known as Pleasant Valley between South Mountain and Elk Ridge, began developing in the early 1800s as a result of the surrounding agricultural countryside and the location of a grist mill in the village along the Antietam Creek. McCoy's marble quarrying business represented a second major industry in the area when marble was discovered on Marble Quarry Road about one mile north of Rohrsersville. The marble works continued to operate at this site until Thomas Smith, son-in-law of G. W. McCoy moved the operation to another location in Rohrsersville. The marble works continued until Smith's death in 1939. The band was the first social and cultural activity within the Village of Rohrsersville.

The brass band movement began in America in the 1830s with the establishment of Mid-Western musical instrument factories that mass produced quality brass instruments at affordable prices. What is referred to as a Golden Age of brass bands lasted from the 1880s until WW I. It has been estimated that there were 10,000 brass bands active in the U. S. by 1890. Rohrsersville's band was similar to other groups that sprang up in every community, providing music at fairs, parades, church picnics, and rallies².

The band remained popular in the community in the mid- to late 19th century as the village prospered, partially due to the arrival of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1867. People of various occupations in and near the village played in the band such as physicians, post masters, farmers, and the village blacksmith. Eventually playing in the band became a time-honored tradition as children who played in the band continued playing into adulthood. Parents, children, and grandchildren played together. When the weather was nice, the members marched from the Band Hall to the grist mill and back to the hall. A horse drawn bandwagon transported the band to its concerts.³

¹ Kemp, Sherry. "Rohrsersville Band Defies History to Contribute 156 Years of Musical Enjoyment." Maryland Cracker Barrel, December/January, 1993, p. 18.

² Ibid, p. 19.

³ Woodring, Frank. "Nostalgic Moments: Seclusion Within Pleasant Valley Enables Rohrsersville to Retain Charm," Maryland Cracker Barrel, December/January 1993, p. 7.

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DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

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The band changed its name to the Rohrsersville Comet Band in 1882. In 1915, the property transferred to Charlotte McCoy, Washington's widow. On the same day the property was transferred to Roy McCoy their son, and then to members of the Rohrsersville Band who included the following:

Fannie E. & John T. Poffenberg
Susie M. & Thomas H. Smith
Cora A. & Nocodemus Z. Rohrer
Bertha M. & Arthur L. Blessing
Nannie F. & Reese S & C. Poffenberger
Lillie C. & John N. Gillan

The Band Hall was built in 1916 and the band underwent its last name change to the Rohrsersville Band. It is reportedly the oldest town band in Maryland and one of the two or three oldest bands continuously active in the country. Historic accounting records from 1917, on file with the Rohrsersville Band, indicate that the band raised money through band fairs and by renting out the hall. One entry showed the receipt of \$15.00 to rent the hall for elections.

By the end of WW II few bands survived. However, dedicated musicians in Washington County still met, kept minutes, and practiced, sometimes with as few as 10 members, but the string of years remained unbroken. During WW II the group canceled all its usual schedule of appearances because of the gasoline shortage⁴.

The advent of modern transportation brought changes to Rohrsersville entering the mid-twentieth century, as interstate commerce developed and altered the economic character of the community. Businesses ceased operating in town and people traveled further for jobs and entertainment. However, the Band Hall continued as a meeting place until 1960 as reported in a local news article which recounted that the "community center" was the scene of almost all the community events in Rohrsersville. This function changed for the hall as events were held in churches in the area that had increased the size of their buildings⁵. Band practice continued in the 1990s with about 30 professional and amateur musicians. The group continues to play 18-20 engagements a year and now even people outside the community travel to Rohrsersville to play in the band⁶.

Theme

Social activity in Rohrsersville, 1837-1947: The Rohrsersville Band has existed for 160 years and was formed while Rohrsersville was still an early farm trading center in Pleasant Valley and continued into the age of the railroad and industrial revolution when towns and cities became dominant over rural areas. The history of the Village of Rohrsersville is one of a community atmosphere that was created by the combination of residents, businesses and cultural resources. The Rohrsersville Band was one of the social and cultural institutions in the community that contributed to the cohesion of this rural historic village. The fact that the band could raise money to construct the hall signified its popularity in the community and surrounding towns in the early 20th century.

⁴ "Rohrsersville Band Going Strong After 124 Years of Existence." The Daily Mail, August 15, 1961, p. 8.

⁵ Woodring, p. 7.

⁶ Kemp, p. 19.

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DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

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Early 20th century public architecture in Rohrsersville: The hall exhibits traditional building elements of Washington County in the early 20th century. These attributes include brick construction, segmental arch windows, and stone foundations. This tradition is borne out by the fact that the Band Hall shares similar characteristics to the three earlier churches in town that were built between 1871 and 1888 as seen in its pilasters, front gable, and decorative brick work.

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Chain of Title

04/02/1857	Martin Eakle & Catharine to Washington McCoy Liber IN 11 Folio 676
04/02/1915	Washington McCoy to Charlotte C. McCoy (widow) Liber 147 Folio 9
04/02/1915	Charolotte C. McCoy to Robert McCoy (son) Liber 147 Folio 9
04/02/1915	Robert McCoy to The Rohrersville Comet Band Liber 147 Folio 9

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Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Social/Educational/Cultural
Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community
Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Band hall/town hall

Known Design Source: Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. WA-III-129

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data


Acreage of nominated property .25 acres

Quadrangle name Keedysville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References DO NOT COMPLETE UTM REFERENCES

A 

B 

Zone Easting Northing

D. 

Fig. 1

F

Age Group	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
18-24	5%	10%	25%	45%	15%
25-34	10%	20%	35%	30%	5%
35-44	15%	25%	30%	25%	5%

U

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary is parcel 196 which contains the band hall and is the legal boundary since the property was acquired for the construction of the hall.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Susan Cianci Salvatore
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organization Woodward-Clyde

date June 1997

street & number 200 Orchard Ridge Drive

telephone 301-670-3361

city or town Gaithersburg

state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
People's Resource Center
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7000

WA-III-129

Band Hall

Washington County

Continuation Sheet 9.1: Major Bibliographical References

Haynes, Richard. Personal interview, Band Director, June 18, 1997.

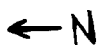
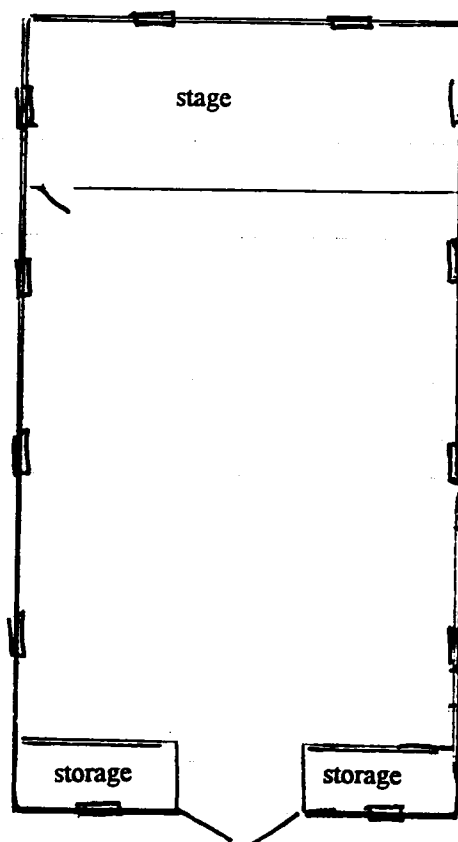
Norris, Reginald. Personal interview, June 18, 1997.

Kemp, Sherry. "Rohrersville Band Defies History to Contribute 156 Years of Musical Enjoyment." Cracker Barrel, Dec./Jan. 1993.

"Rohrersville Band Going Strong After 124 Years of Existence." The Daily Mail, Aug. 15, 1961, p. 8.

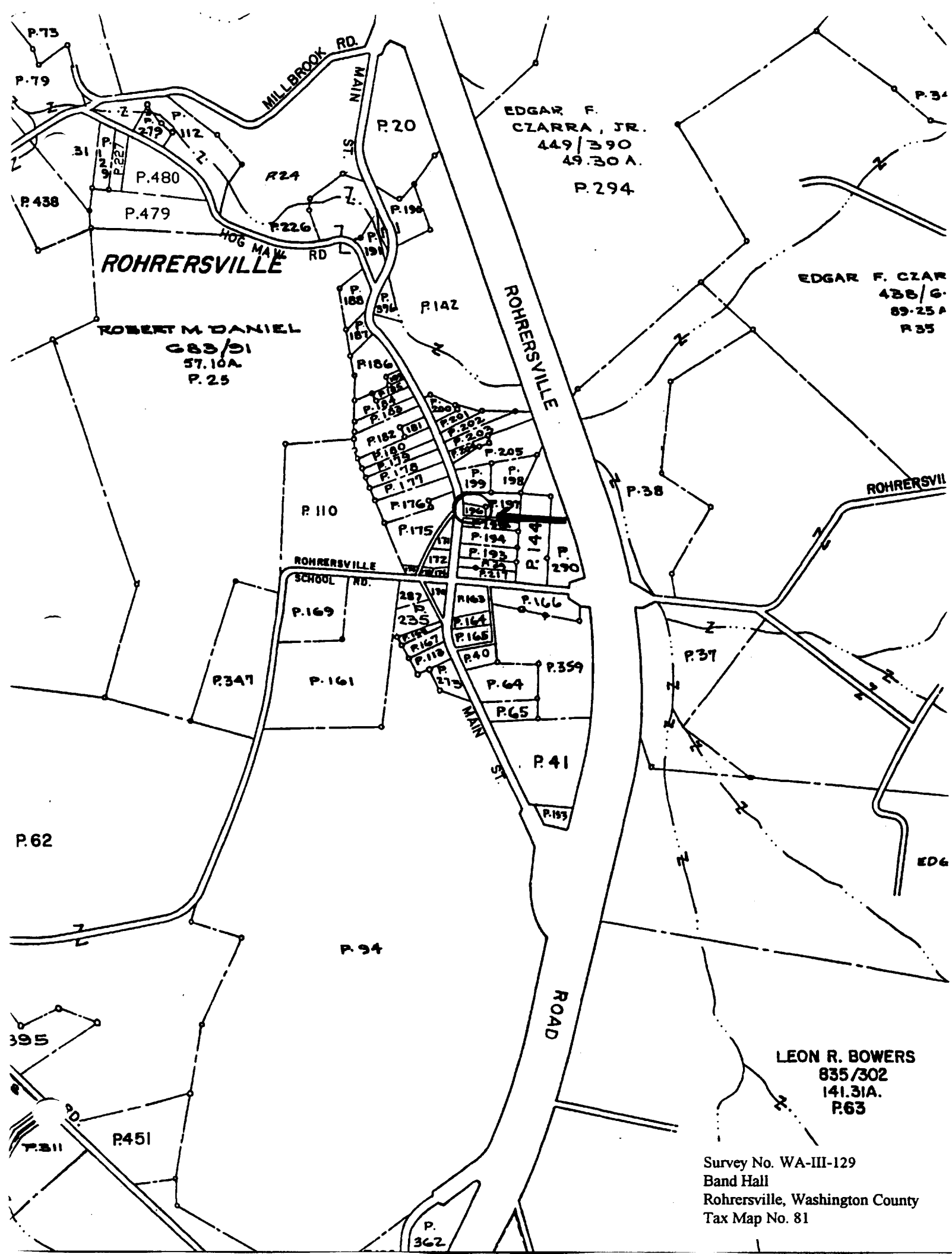
Washington County Land Records

Woodring, Frank. "Nostalgic Moments: Seclusion Within Pleasant Valley Enables Rohrersville to Retain Charm," Maryland Cracker Barrel, December/January 1993.

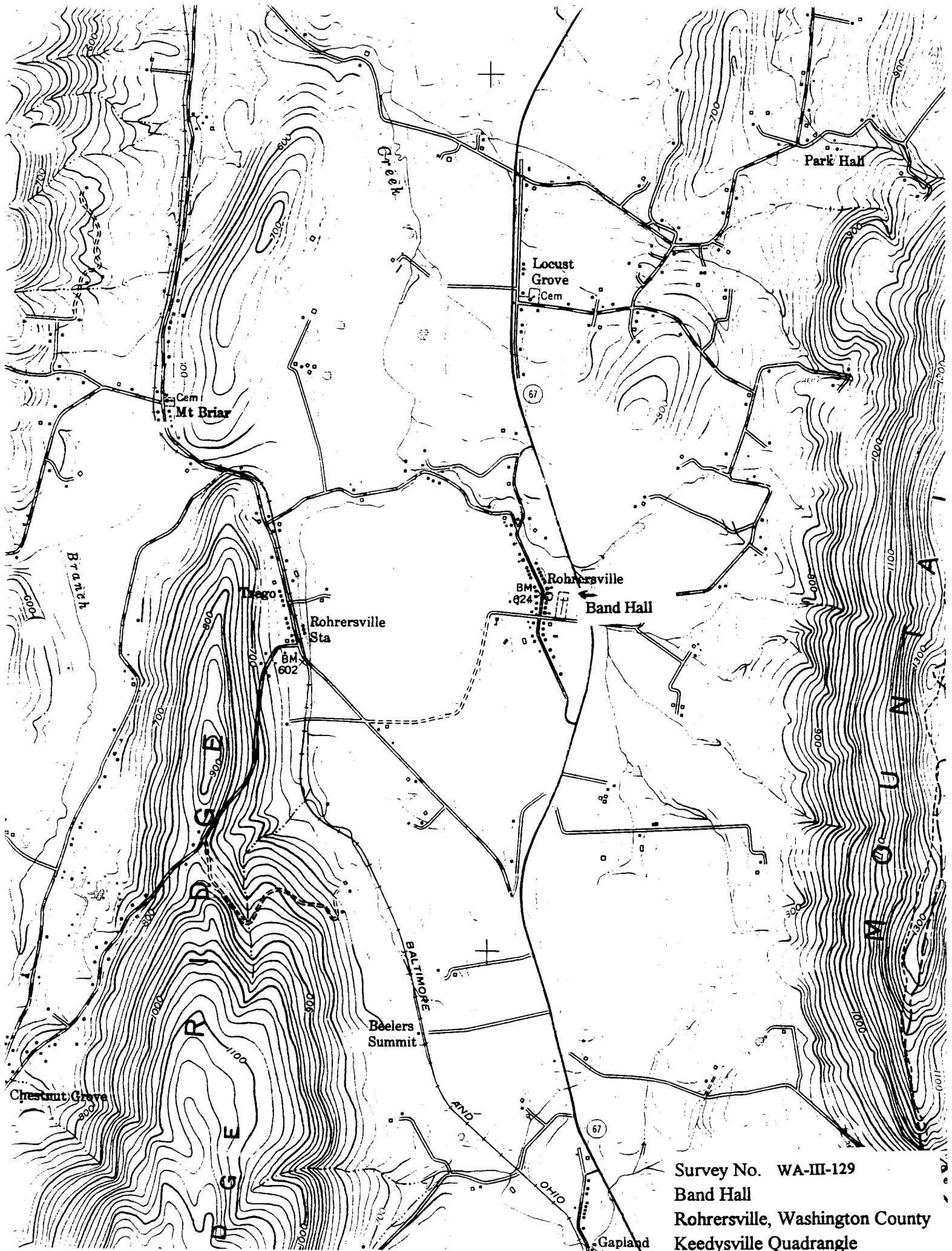


approximate scale: 1/4" = 2'

Survey No. WA-III-129
Band Hall
Rohrersville, Washington County
Main Level Floor Plan.



Survey No. WA-III-129
Band Hall
Rohrerstown, Washington County
Tax Map No. 81



Survey No. WA-III-129
Band Hall
Rohrsville, Washington County
Keedysville Quadrangle



WA-III-129

ROHRERSVILLE, MD

WASHINGTON CO.

PHOTO BY SC. SALVATORE

5/97

DEG. LOC. MHT

NE View

~~_____~~



WA-III-129

Band Hall, Rohrerstown
Washington County, MD

S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Neg: MD SHPO

Band Hall, N and E elevations

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WA-III-129

Band Hall, Rettersville

Washington County, MD

S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Neg: MD S#00

Band Hall, west elevation

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WA-III-129
Band Hall, Rehersville
Washington County, MD
S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Neg: MD SHPO

View to stage, looking W

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WA-~~II~~-129

Band Hall, Rohrsville
Washington County, MD
S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Negs MD SHPO

Hall, view to E

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WA-III-129
Band Hall, Rohrer'sville
Washington County, MD
S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Neg. MD SAPO

Band Hall, woodwork, looking SW at Stage

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WA-III-129

Band Hall, Rohmersville

Washington County, MD

SC- Salvatore

6/97

Neg= MD SHPO

Band Hall, pressed tin ceiling, looking W

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WA-TII-129

Band Hall, Rohrerstown
Washington County MD
S.C. Salvatore

6/97

Neg: MD SHPD

Band Hall, ticket window, looking NW

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